



American Planning Association

Making Great Communities Happen

NEWS RELEASE

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**American Planning Association Designates the
Downtown Franklin Historic District
One of Top 10 Great Neighborhoods for 2009**
First 'Great Place' Designation in Tennessee

Franklin, TN – The American Planning Association (APA) announced today that the Downtown Franklin Historic District has been designated one of 10 Great Neighborhoods for 2009 by APA's *Great Places in America* program. APA Great Places exemplify exceptional character and highlight the role planners and planning play in creating communities of lasting value. Franklin is the first city in Tennessee to be selected for a *Great Places in America* designation.

The APA singled out the Downtown Franklin Historic District not only because of the neighborhood's outstanding historic character and architecture, but for the planning and meaningful protection measures the city has adopted to ensure Franklin's unique sense of place is not compromised by future growth and development. During the past 40 years, downtown Franklin has drawn upon its rich history to build a prosperous future.

"It is an honor to be the first city in Tennessee to achieve this designation from the American Planning Association," said Mayor John Schroer. "Our City staff, elected officials and the citizens and businesses of Franklin work each day to preserve our history and maintain and create a sense of place in our City. Franklin is also a new growth City with Corporate headquarters and businesses moving here all the time and the staff has to deal with preservation and growth and excels in both as demonstrated by this award. We are proud of the dedication of the entire city that has made Franklin a must experience destination!"

"Our City planning staff does a phenomenal job in working with citizens and stakeholders for long range planning designs that incorporate historic preservation, open spaces, circulation patterns and sustainability," said City Administrator Eric Stuckey. "This is truly a community recognition and this designation shows how much the entire community values and works to preserve our neighborhoods."

Through Great Places in America, APA recognizes unique and authentic characteristics found in three essential components of all communities — streets, neighborhoods, and public spaces. APA Great Places offer better choices for where and how people work and live everyday, places that are enjoyable, safe, and desirable. Such places are defined by many characteristics, including architectural features, accessibility, functionality, and community involvement.

"The Downtown Franklin Historic District demonstrates the lasting value created through meaningful and well-executed planning," said APA Executive Director Paul Farmer, FAICP. "The city has taken noteworthy measures to ensure that Franklin's unique sense of place is not compromised by future growth and development" he added.

Named after American statesman and inventor Benjamin Franklin, the 16-block neighborhood is far from being a neglected downtown or kitschy tourist destination. Here you'll find a compact and lively neighborhood with drug stores, grocery, library and an elementary school all within a half-mile walking distance.

The story might have turned out differently, however. Concerns about rapid change and development in the historic neighborhood were raised by residents in the 1960s with construction of U.S. Interstate 65. In response, the Heritage Foundation of Franklin and Williamson County was founded by citizens in 1967. Work by the foundation and others led to the neighborhood being added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1972.

These efforts did not go unnoticed by Franklin's business leaders and elected officials. The Downtown Franklin Association was organized in 1984 to help revitalize the neighborhood's commercial core along Main Street. This area has since attracted more than 70 businesses, including boutiques, antique shops and restaurants.

Taking the lead in starting the city's first long-range planning effort in 1988 was then-Mayor Jerry Sharber. Since then several plans have helped shape on-going revitalization and historic preservation efforts in the neighborhood. Notably, the Franklin Land Use Plan, adopted in 2004, calls for mixed-use development. The Central Franklin Area Plan focuses on historic preservation and the 2008 Character Overlay District encourages construction of residential infill housing.

The city also has made major streetscape improvements to the neighborhood that were completed in 2001 and include street tree plantings, brick sidewalks, improved pedestrian crosswalks and burying utility wires.

The nine other APA 2009 Great Neighborhoods are:

Bungalow Heaven, Pasadena, CA
 Faubourg Marigny, New Orleans, LA
 The Haymarket, Lincoln, NE
 Village of Kenmore, Kenmore, NY
 Downtown Fargo, Fargo, ND
 Ladd's Addition, Portland, OR
 Montrose, Houston, TX
 Historic Hilton Village, Newport News, VA
 Browne's Addition, Spokane, WA



For more information about these neighborhoods, as well as lists of the 2009 APA 10 Great Streets and 10 Great Public Spaces, visit www.planning.org/greatplaces.

This year's Great Places in America will be celebrated as part of APA's National Community Planning Month in October 2009; for more about the special month, visit www.planning.org/ncpm.

The American Planning Association and its professional institute, the American Institute of Certified Planners, are dedicated to advancing the art, science and profession of good planning -- physical, economic, and social -- so as to create communities that offer better choices for where and how people work and live. Members of APA help create communities of lasting value and encourage civic leaders, business interests, and citizens to play a meaningful role in creating communities that enrich people's lives. APA has offices in Washington, D.C., Chicago, Ill, and Shanghai, China. For more information, visit its website at www.planning.org.

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